



WISSENSCHAFTLICHE KURZMITTEILUNGEN

The maned rat, *Lophiomys imhausii* Milne-Edwards, 1867, in Djibouti, NE-Africa (Mammalia: Rodentia: Lophiomyinae)

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The long-haired fur with a contrasting black-and-white facial pattern renders the maned rat, *Lophiomys imhausii* Milne-Edwards, 1867, an unmistakable African rodent (WILLIAMS 1967; HALTENORTH and DILLER 1977; KINGDON 1997). The genus is currently considered to be monotypic, comprising a number of taxa described as species or subspecies (ELLERMAN 1940; MISONNE 1974; MUSSER and CARLETON 1993).

On March 3rd, 1993, two *L. imhausii* were found (by T.K.) in the SW of Djibouti. They lay dead on road some 12 km SW of Ouea on the route from Djibouti to Ali Sabieh. The specimens (an adult and a juvenile or subadult) were not preserved, but both photographed to document the presence of *L. imhausii* in Djibouti (Fig. 1). The habitat where the carcasses were found is a hilly area (ca. 400 m a.s.l.) with open thorn bush (*Acacia mellifera*, *A. tortilis*; AUDRU et al. 1987) on stony ground. The biology of *L. imhausii* is so little known, that no convincing explanation can be offered for two individuals being accidentally killed close together. They may have been a female followed by an adolescent young.

From distribution records available (see below) the finding of *L. imhausii* in Djibouti extends the species range to the west. However, the appearance of the species in Djibouti surely is not a recent event, but due to more intensively observing Djibouti wild life (KÜNZEL and KÜNZEL 1998).

The distribution range of *L. imhausii* was listed or mapped more or less accurately, totally or in part, by several authors. Its occurrence in Djibouti is not known (MISONNE 1974; SIMONEAU 1974; MUSSER and CARLETON 1993). However, it could possibly be that the brush-tailed porcupine, *Aetherus africanus*, a Central African rain forest dweller included in the Djibouti mammal fauna by SIMONEAU (1974), in reality was a *L. imhausii*.

The type specimen of *L. imhausii* was bought alive in Aden (Yemen), but with the discovery of the species in Eritrea, the origin of the specimen was assumed to have been somewhere in "Somalia". Until present the existence of the species in the region of the type locality Aden could not be proven. The discovery of skull fragments, dated to the 11th century, in a cave in the Judean Desert near the Dead Sea was related neither to a palaeontological nor an archaeological context (DOR 1966), and thus it cannot be excluded to have been an imported animal. Further indications for the existence of *L. imhausii* in Arabia (KINGDON 1990) cannot be substantiated at present.

We present a detailed map of the species' African range (Fig. 2), preferring either original sources or reliable compilations. The species is actually known from:

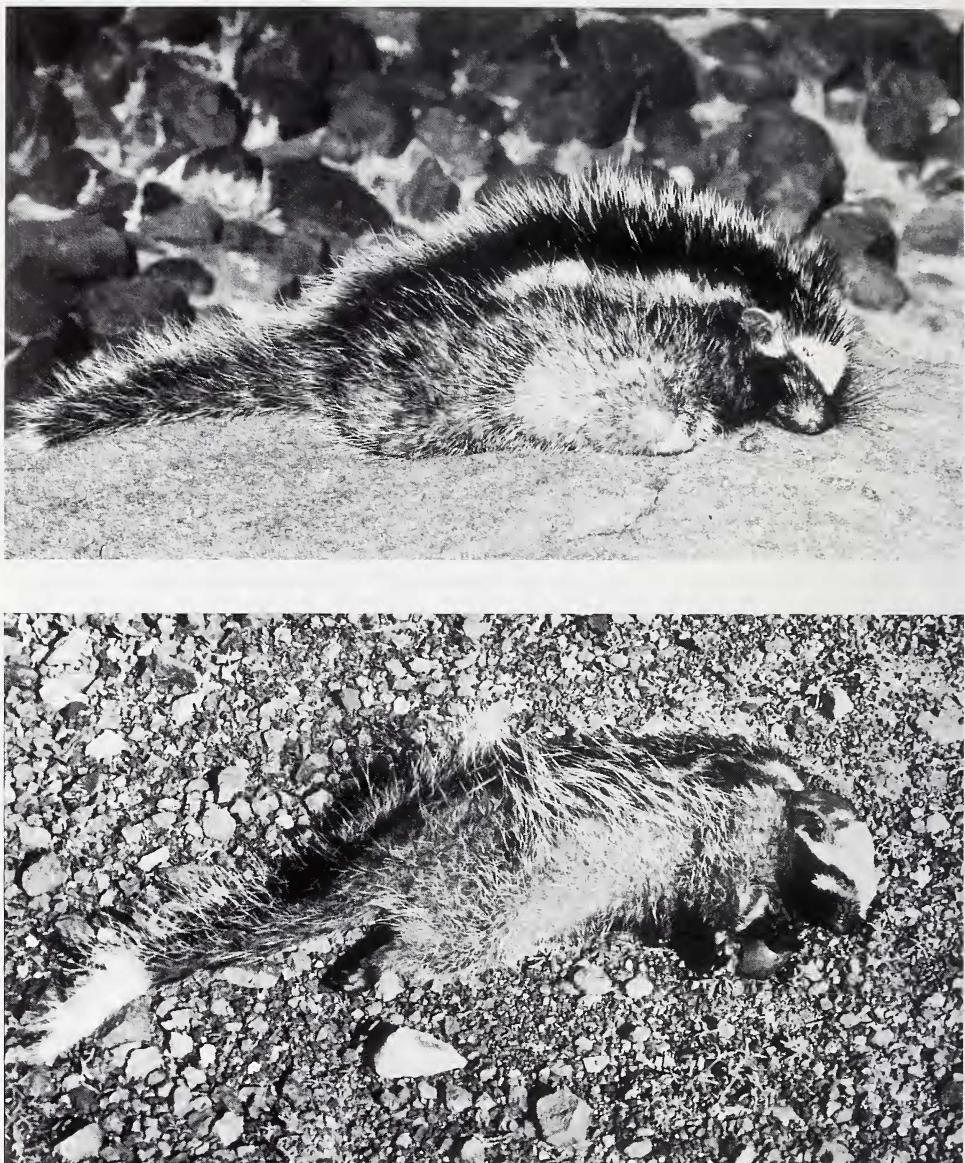


Fig. 1. *Lophiomys imhausii*, adult (above) and adolescent (bottom), dead on road, SE-Djibouti, 3. March 1993. Photos: TH. KÜNZEL.

Sudan: PETERS (1867): Jebel Maman, 16.16. N–36.48. E, N of Kassala. GIGLIOLI (1881): (Jebel) Eshanid, Red Sea Hills between Suakin and Sinkat. SETZER (1956): near Port Sudan. MISONNE (1974) erroneously gives SE-Sudan (instead of NE) as the species range in this country. Records available for Eritrea and Ethiopia were mapped by YALDEN et al. (1976). Somalia: GIGLIOLI (1881): Somali coast. (PEEL 1900: mentions "Sheikh" as a locality for *L. imhausii*, but does not indicate whether this is [Upper] Sheikh in Somalia or Sheikh [Hussein] in Ethiopia). DRAKE-BROCKMAN (1910): Burao; Upper Sheikh. SIMONETTA (1963), ROCHE (1976): Jesomma, 04.03. N–45.44. E, between Bulo Burti and El Bur. Si-

MONETTA et al. (1978): Hargeisa and Berbera. Kenya: ANDERSON and DE WINTON (1902): Ravine Station, Mau Distr. THOMAS (1905): Elburgon, Mau Forest; between Londiani and Lumbwa, Mau Forest. THOMAS (1910): near Njoro, Mau Forest; Nakuru, Rift Valley; Mutaragwa (= Ndaraugwa, 00.07. S–36.37. E), 9 000 ft, Aberdare Mts. DOLLMAN (1911): Solai, 00.07. N–36.12. E. HELLER (1912): Mt. Gargues (Uaragess), 6 000 ft, Mathews Range. LÖNNBERG (1912): Mau Escarpment. KOLLMANN (1913): Mt. Kenya, 2 400 m. HOLLISTER (1919): Naivasha Escarpment; W-side Mt. Kenya, 8 500 ft. GOLDFINCH (1923): Aberdare

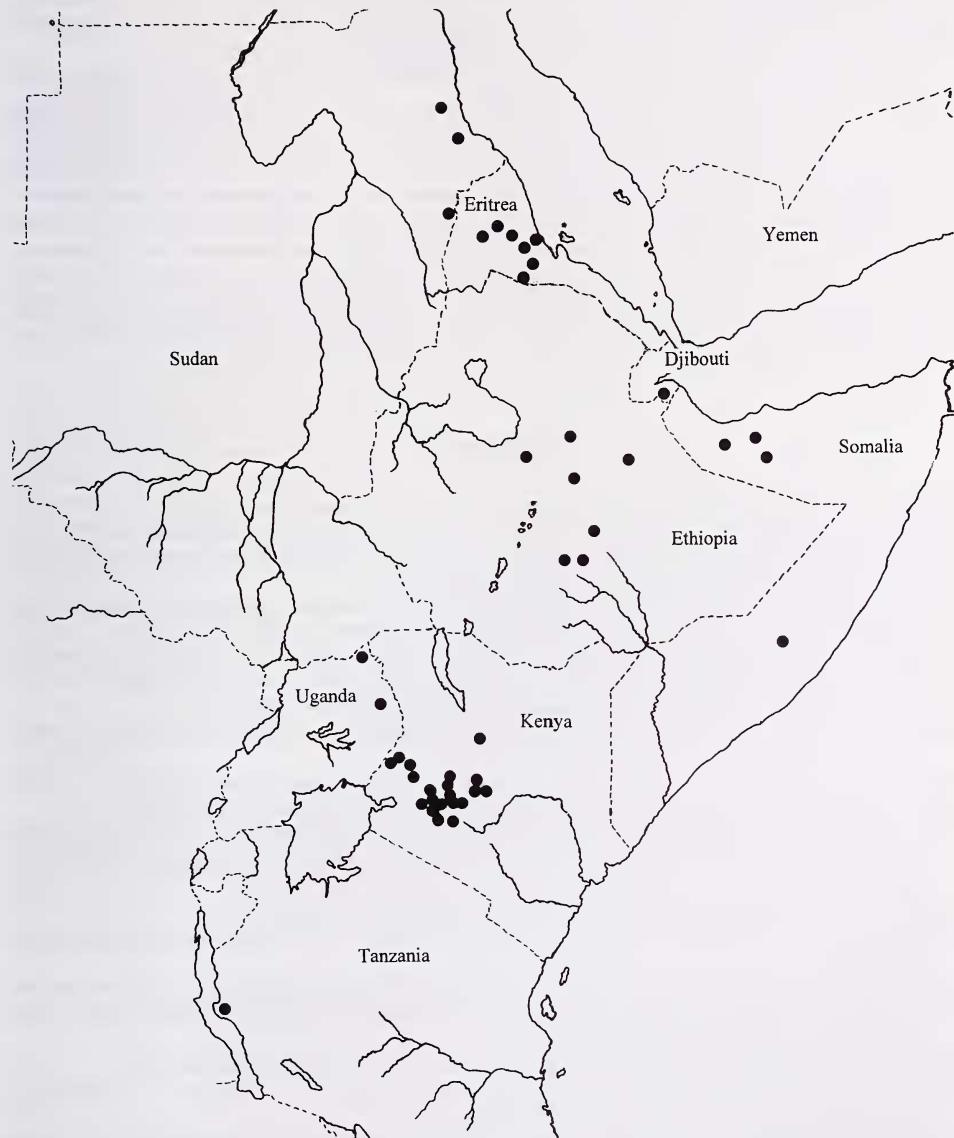


Fig. 2. Distribution of *Lophiomys imhausii*; for details see text. In the Kenyan range some symbols cover one to three neighbouring locality records.

side of Nakuru. RUXTON (1926): Cherengani Hills. ARTHUR (1957): Nanyuki, W-side Mt. Kenya. JOHNSON (1960): Sabukia, 00.00.-36.14. E. WILLIAMS (1967): Mt. Elgon. GUGGISBERG (1968): near Rongai, W of Nakuru; near Eldoret, Uasin Gishu Plateau. DELANY (1975): Trans Nzoia, 1900 m. WAHLERT (1984): Laikipia Escarpment, 0.28. N-36.07. E; Laikipia Forest; Nyeri; N-Abderdares; SW-Kenya. JOHNSON et al. (1993): Muruku Sublocation, 0.35. N-36.15. E, Laikipia Distr. Uganda: THOMAS (1906) listed *L. imhausii* for Uganda, which at that time comprised W-Kenya east to the Rift Valley, and is based on a specimen from Ravine Station, Mau Distr., collected by the then Governor of Uganda, F. J. JACKSON (see ANDERSON and DE WINTON 1902). KINGDON (1974): Moroto, Karamoja; in map (: 525) the Kidepo area in the NE is plotted [original source not traced]. Tanzania: KINGDON (1974): 525, map; 1997: 188, map: Mahali Mts., E of L. Tanganyika.

As far as the fossil history of the genus *Lophiomys* is documented (TOPACEVSKI and SKORIK 1984; WAHLERT 1984; AGUILAR and MICHAUX 1990) it is an immigrant from Asia and its range became restricted to northeastern Africa. This could be attributed to geological and climatic factors (erosion and vegetational changes). Modern records available indicate that the recent species range appears to be fragmented, at least between Dibouti-Somalia and Ethiopia by the Danakil Desert, and between Ethiopia and Kenya by an extensive arid region. Furthermore, it seems that in the southern part of the species range denser forests are inhabited (Mahali Mts., Mt. Kenya, Aberdares, Mau) than in the north (Eritrea, Red Sea Hills). However, the collecting data equally indicates that more intensive search for *L. imhausii* may interconnect some of the known disjunct populations.

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